

PM Open Microphone Testimony and Closing Remarks by Secretary Thompson
Pages 251-302

WE'RE NOW GOING TO MOVE INTO THE OPEN MIC SESSION.

WE WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO DO, WE WILL HAVE SOME MICS AROUND THE ROOM.

AND WE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADD TO COMMENTS THAT YOU HAVE MADE DURING THE COURSE OF THE DAY, OR JUST PUT OTHER ISSUES OUT ON THE TABLE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE FEDERAL OFFICIALS THAT ARE ON THE DIAS AND AROUND THE ROOM. WE ARE EXPECTING SECRETARY THOMAS TO JOIN US SOME TIME IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO THAT.

BUT LET ME DO THIS, LET ME JUST OPEN THE FLOOR TO ANYBODY, PARTICULARLY, LET ME, PERHAPS GIVE TOP PRIORITY TO THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE BEEN WITH US DURING THE COURSE OF THE DAY BUT NOT HAD OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE TESTIMONY.

IF THERE ARE ANY OF YOU HERE WHO WOULD LIKE TO ADD YOUR COMMENTS, RAISE YOUR HAND.

WE WILL GET A MIC OVER TO YOU.

ANYBODY AT ALL?

YES?

OVER IN THE CORNER, WE HAVE SEVERAL FOLKS OTHER HERE.

GREAT.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

AND IF YOU WOULD, AS WE'VE DONE IN THE FORMER TESTIMONY, IF YOU WOULD INTRODUCE YOURSELF, PLEASE, AS YOU BEGIN WITH YOUR COMMENTS.

AND WE'RE GOING TO TRY TO MAKE THESE BRIEF.

I WANT TO REALLY SEE IF WE CAN MOVE AROUND THE ROOM AND MAKE SURE THAT WE HAVE A NUMBER OF VOICES HEARD.

PLEASE, SIR.

>> HI.

MY NAME IS TODD EVANS.

I'M FROM NEW JERSEY.

SOME OF THE COMMENTS, I REALLY -- THIS IS MY VERY FIRST CONFERENCE HERE.

BUT I ALSO WAS INSTITUTIONALIZED.

I WAS IN ELIZABEN STATE SCHOOL, WHICH IS A HOME FOR BOYS, AND ALSO WOODWARD R. JOHNSTON.

BUT LIKE SOME OF THE PEOPLE ARE SAYING, I THINK IT'S WRONG BECAUSE THAT'S BEEN A LOT OF ABUSING IN A LOT OF THE INSTITUTIONS.

AND A LOT OF MY FRIENDS ARE STILL IN THERE.

AND I JUST WANT TO SEE IT JUST PUT ASIDE AND LET THESE PEOPLE COME OUT OF THEM AND GET INTO REGULAR COMMUNITY.

THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU, SIR.

THERE WAS ANOTHER HAND OVER HERE.

YES, PLEASE. RIGHT OVER -- THANK YOU.

>> MY NAME IS ED PALERMO.

YOU KNOW, KIND OF ASK YOURSELVES THIS QUESTION.

WOULD YOU PUT YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER IN AN INSTITUTION KNOWING THAT HE OR SHE DID NOT WANT TO GO.

I DIDN'T WANT TO GO, IN THE FIRST PLACE, IN AN INSTITUTION.

I FEEL THAT IT IS WRONG FOR PEOPLE TO BE IN INSTITUTIONS.

THEY NEED TO BE OUT AND GIVEN A CHANCE.

I MEAN, SO WE ARE HANDICAPPED AND WE'RE IN WHEELCHAIRS.

THAT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE.

WE NEED A CHANCE.

AND SO DO PEOPLE IN INSTITUTIONS TODAY.

THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU, MR. PALERMO.

AND LET ME ACTUALLY ENCOURAGE THOSE OF YOU ON THE DIAS. IF THERE ARE THOUGHTS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE, OR OBSERVATIONS THAT CAME FROM YOUR LISTENING TODAY, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO HOP IN. OTHERS OF YOU?

YES, SIR?

JUST ONE SECOND, PLEASE.

>> BILL COFFELT FROM CALIFORNIA.

I WOULD JUST LIKE TO EMPHASIZE AGAIN ABOUT THE FEDERAL, FOR THE FFP FOR BOTH THE INSTITUTIONS, STATE INSTITUTIONS, AND COMMUNITY SERVICES.

IN CALIFORNIA, WE'RE CONSIDERED A LEADER IN DISABILITIES.

WE LEAD THE COUNTRY IN THE NUMBER OF THE LARGEST INSTITUTIONS IN THE COUNTRY.

WE LEAD THE COUNTRY IN THE LOWEST PER CAPITA FUNDING OF BOTH OUR STATE INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES.

THESE ARE NOT THINGS WE LIKE OR ARE PROUD TO BE LEADERS IN, BUT IT'S ALL WITH, BECAUSE OF FEDERAL INCENTIVES.

SO I REALLY WANT TO STRESS AGAIN THAT IF WE'RE GOING TO GET FEDERAL INCENTIVES FOR HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS, WE NEED TO HAVE THE SAME KIND OF FEDERAL DISINCENTIVES TO FUND OUR STATE PROGRAMS, BECAUSE IN CALIFORNIA, FOR EXAMPLE, OUR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES DIRECTOR JUST WENT ON RECORD AS SAYING, WHY SHOULD WE MOVE PEOPLE OUT OF THE INSTITUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY BECAUSE HE GIVES THAT 50% OF FP FOR OUR STATE INSTITUTIONS.

AND THE BUILDINGS, AND THE POLICE FORCE, AND THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, ALL THOSE THINGS STILL COST THE SAME.

SO WE HAVE NO INCENTIVE, REALLY, TO MOVE FROM ONE TYPE OF FEDERAL PARTICIPATION TO ANOTHER.

SO I REALLY STRESS, IF WE'RE GOING TO GIVE INCENTIVES, WE ALSO NEED TO DO DISINCENTIVES.

THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU.

THANK YOU, BILL.

OTHER COMMENTS?

YES, PLEASE.

SOME OF YOU HAVE ALREADY HEARD FROM ME EARLIER TODAY.

BUT MY NAME IS AILEEN O'HARA.

AND I JUST WANT TO TALK FOR A MINUTE ABOUT HOUSING, IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND ESPECIALLY.

I'M PART RIGHT NOW OF A GROUP THAT IS CALLED OPENING DOORS, A HOME OF YOU OWN.

AND THIS PROGRAM IS ONE OF THE ONLY PROGRAMS THAT I HAVE SEEN IN

MONTGOMERY COUNTY THAT SPECIFICALLY TARGETS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN TRYING TO GET THEM OUT OF INSTITUTIONS, NURSING HOMES, WHATEVER IT BE, THEIR SITUATION, AND INTO THEIR OWN HOMES.

AND I JUST WANT TO STRESS TO ALL FEDERAL OFFICIALS PRESENT THIS AFTERNOON THAT WHEN THE GRANT FOR THIS PROGRAM IS UP AT THE END OF JUNE 2002, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE OTHER AGENCIES JUMP IN AND HELP TO KEEP THIS PROGRAM GOING AND TO GET PROGRAMS LIKE THIS GOING NATIONWIDE BECAUSE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES DO DESERVE TO BE OUT ON THEIR OWN AND MAKING THEIR OWN DECISIONS ABOUT WHERE THEY WANT TO LIVE.

A YEAR AGO I MOVED OUT, AND HAVE LOVED IT, AND HAVE NEVER REGRETTED THE PAIN STAKING STEPS THAT I HAD TO GO THROUGH.

>> THANK YOU, MS. O'HARA.

OTHER COMMENTS, PLEASE?

YES?

>> HI.

I WANTED YOU ALL TO SLEEP TONIGHT.

I MENTIONED THAT THERE WERE FOUR BARRIERS, AND I ONLY GAVE YOU ONE.

SO I JUST WANT TO FOLLOW UP.

BESIDES THE MEDICAID LAW ITSELF, THE STATUTE, AND ITS INSTITUTIONAL BIAS, I WANTED TO MENTION, OF COURSE, THE LABOR SHORTAGE AND WHAT SECRETARY CHOW REFERS TO AS THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING WORK FORCE.

AND YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT IT A LOT TODAY.

BUT I MUST SAY THAT IN THE PAST WHEN ANCOR MEMBERS, WHO HISTORICALLY AS PROVIDERS FACED A BIG DIFFICULTY IN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF QUALITY STAFF, THERE WAS ALWAYS A REPLACEMENT POOL.

OUR LABOR MARKET NO LONGER HAS THAT AVAILABILITY.

AND THE DISPARITY, AS YOU'VE ALREADY HEARD, BETWEEN THE INSTITUTIONAL WAGES, THE WAGES PAID TO INSTITUTIONAL INDIVIDUALS, THE STAFF VERSUS THE COMMUNITY IS A BIG BARRIER.

SO WITH THAT IN MIND, A COUPLE MORE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TO EMPHASIZE THE CHALLENGES OF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF DIRECT SUPPORT WORKERS TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN ITS 21ST CENTURY WORK FORCE: THAT HHS AND CMS SHOULD ROUTINELY AND FORMERLY COLLECT DATA FROM STATES REGARDING THE SUPPLY, THE TURNOVER, VACANCIES, RECRUITMENT, AND COMPARISON PAYMENT RATES BETWEEN STATE INSTITUTIONS AND PRIVATE PROVIDERS IN THE COMMUNITY; AND THAT THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD PROPOSE, AND CONGRESS ENACT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE ENHANCED FEDERAL MATCH TO STATES TO INCREASE THE WAGES IN BENEFITS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO PROVIDE SUPPORTS AND SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY; AND THAT AS AN IMMEDIATE SHORT TERM SOLUTION OF THE ADMINISTRATION, AT LEAST PROPOSE A MEDICAID STATE DEMONSTRATION WITH AN ENHANCED MAP.

THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

PLEASE, OTHER COMMENTS?

ARE THERE THINGS THAT -- YES?

>> LARRY, I AGREE WITH YOU.

THE HANDS ARE FEW.

AND I MYSELF WOULD LIKE TO REALLY HEAR SOME TYPE OF RESPONSE FROM ANY MEMBER OF THE PANEL OF JUST WHAT YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH THE DAY.

THE LADY WHO'S HERE FROM THE WHITE HOUSE HAS BEEN THERE ALMOST ALL OF THE DAY, AND A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN IN AND OUT.

I DON'T KNOW THE TIME.

BUT I THINK IT WOULD BE REALLY GOOD TO HEAR ANY TYPE OF RESPONSE IN CORELATION TO WHAT PEOPLE FEEL THEY'VE HEARD TODAY.

>> JENNIFER, PLEASE?

>> THANK YOU.

AND YES, I'M HAPPY TO RESPOND TO SOME OF THE, I GUESS MY OWN COMMENTS.

A COUPLE OF PEOPLE HAVE SAID TODAY THAT WE KNOW ABOUT THESE BARRIERS.

A LOT OF US DO KNOW ABOUT THESE BARRIERS.

BUT THE PRESIDENT IS VERY MUCH COMMITTED NOW TO ACTION.

ONE OF THE REASONS I'VE BEEN HERE ALL DAY IS BECAUSE WE WANT TO BE READY WITH A QUICK RESPONSE WHEN THE REPORT COMES OUT TO TAKE ACTION, AND IMPORTANT MAJOR ACTION.

I'VE BEEN DEEPLY TOUCHED BY A LOT OF THE COMMENTS TODAY, AS I KNOW OTHERS ON THE PANEL AND OTHERS IN THE AUDIENCE ALSO PROBABLY HAVE.

I'VE LIVED PERSONALLY THROUGH A LOT OF THIS.

I HAD THE MISFORTUNE OF LIVING IN A NURSING HOME MYSELF, VERY BRIEFLY JUST THREE MONTHS AFTER AN ACCIDENT.

BUT I KNOW HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO GET PEOPLE OUT OF NURSING HOMES.

IT'S A COMPLEX ISSUE.

YOU HEARD FROM MY PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT, BERTHA, WHO IS SO IMPORTANT IN MY LIFE TO HELP ME DO THE THINGS THAT I NEED TO DO. BUT SHE HAS STRUGGLES OF HER OWN JUST TO BE ABLE TO LIVE AND TAKE CARE OF HER SON.

THREE JOBS TO LIVE A LIFE IS, AGAIN, A POOR QUALITY OF LIFE. AND WE CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT, TOO.

SO I DO WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT WE'VE BEEN LISTENING VERY, VERY CAREFULLY AND PLAN TO DO SOMETHING IMPORTANT WITH THIS INFORMATION.

THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU, JENNIFER.

OTHER COMMENTS?

PLEASE.

>> I'M KATHY MCKINLEY, AND I'M WITH THE ARC OF THE UNITED STATES.

AND I JUST WANTED TO REITERATE A FEW THINGS THAT WERE SAID BY SOME OTHER PEOPLE AND MENTION A COUPLE OF OTHER PROGRAMS THAT I THINK DEFINITELY NEED TO BE MENTIONED AFTER WE'VE HEARD SO MANY COMPELLING STORIES ABOUT FAMILIES AND THE PROBLEMS THAT THEY FACE GETTING THE NEEDED SUPPORTS IN THE COMMUNITY.

THERE'S A PROGRAM UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ACT CALLED THE FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM.

IT'S BEEN AROUND FOR A WHILE.

IT'S NEVER BEEN WELL FUNDED.

WE'RE TRYING TO GET MORE MONEY INTO THAT PROGRAM THIS YEAR, AND THAT CERTAINLY WOULD BE -- IT CERTAINLY WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THE ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTED US THIS YEAR AND IN FUTURE EFFORTS TO ADD TO THAT PROGRAM, WHICH COULD HELP FAMILIES STAY TOGETHER AND PROVIDE NEEDED SUPPORTS AND SERVICES TO THEIR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES.

THERE'S A PROGRAM CALLED THE FAMILY CARE GIVER'S SUPPORT ACT, WHICH WAS ACTUALLY INITIATED BY SENATOR GRASSLEY AND INCLUDED AS PART OF THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT.

ONE OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE FAMILY CARE GIVER SUPPORT ACT WOULD BE TO HELP PROVIDE SOME RESPITE SERVICES TO ELDERLY PARENTS TAKING CARE OF ADULT CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.

AND WE'VE BEEN HAVING SOME PROBLEMS ON HOW THAT LAW HAS BEEN INTERPRETED.

AND WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE SOME ACTION COME OUT OF THAT ADMINISTRATION SO THAT MONEY FROM THAT IMPORTANT PROGRAM CAN HELP AGING PARENTS LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY.

THE ARC -- I DID AN INFORMAL SURVEY ABOUT A MONTH AGO OF ARCS AROUND THE COUNTRY.

AND JUST TO GIVE YOU JUST A TINY INDICATION OF THE NEED THAT PEOPLE FACE RELATED TO HOUSING, IN JUST SEVENTEEN STATES, WE CAME UP WITH OVER 81,000 PEOPLE, JUST WITH MENTAL RETARDATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES WAITING FOR HOUSING IN THE COMMUNITY.

THAT DOESN'T COVER ALL THE OTHER PEOPLE WITH ALL THE OTHER KINDS OF DISABILITIES WHO NEED HOUSING IN THE COMMUNITY.

SO IT'S INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT THAT HUD BE AT THE TABLE WHEN ALL THESE DECISIONS ARE BEING MADE AND HUD REALIZES THAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES NEED THEIR FAIR SHARE OF HOUSING DOLLARS.

THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

I THINK WE HAD A COMMENT OVER HERE.

YES?

>> MY NAME IS J. ROCK JOHNSON.

FIRST I WANT TO SPEAK TO THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH.

AND IT REALLY NEEDS TO BE 51% OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES.

THAT SENDS A REALLY STRONG MESSAGE.

WE'RE THE EXPERTS WHO HAVE THE INFORMATION THAT NEEDS TO GO TO THAT COMMISSION.

AND IT ALSO BRINGS HOME THE MESSAGE, NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US.

TO THE VETERAN'S ADMINISTRATION, I WOULD LIKE TO NOTE THAT THERE'S A FAIL FIRST POLICY, WHERE PEOPLE ARE GETTING THE OLD PSYCHIATRIC MEDICATIONS AND MUST FAIL ON THEM BEFORE THEY CAN GET THE NEWER.

THE RATIONALE OF IT BEING COST EFFECTIVE IS NOT COST EFFECTIVE AT ALL.

IT'S REALLY A FAIL POLICY.

WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THAT CHANGED.

NOW, WORKERS WHO GET SSDI, WHO GET THAT DISABILITY BASED ON THE THEIR PSYCHIATRIC SITUATION ARE ALSO UNDER A CONDITION WHERE THEY CAN'T GET THE PRESCRIPTION BENEFIT. THIS SEEMS LIKE QUITE AN ILLOGICAL CONTRADICTION AND SHOULD BE CHANGED.

ALSO, THE MENTAL HEALTH BLOCK GRANT, THE MENTAL HEALTH BLOCK GRANT PLANNING COUNCIL REALLY NEEDS A DEDICATED STAFF THAT REPORTS TO THE COUNCIL.

AND THAT COUNCIL SHOULD CONTROL AND DIRECT BOTH THE BLOCK GRANT FUNDS AND THE PROCEEDS FROM THE IMD EXCLUSION OR THE 1915 C WAIVER, WHATEVER SITUATION WILL BRING THOSE RESOURCES INTO THE STATE BLOCK PLANNING COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES.

THANK YOU.

>> THERE WAS ANOTHER COMMENT OVER HERE?

YES?

>> HI.

I'M RANDOLPH HACK FROM HAWAII.

I'VE COME A LONG DISTANCE.

I WANT TO ASSURE MY FELLOW PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS THAT ANY FEDERAL PRISONER WHO HAS MENTAL ILLNESS HAS PROPER TREATMENT WHILE INCARCERATED IN A FEDERAL FACILITY.

NOW, I KNOW THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE HAS SOME SAY SO ABOUT THAT, BECAUSE SADLY THERE ARE MANY MORE PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IN PRISONS AND JAILS THAN THERE ARE IN MENTAL INSTITUTIONS.

AND THEIR TREATMENT AND CARE IS OF UTMOST CONCERN.

A LOT OF THEM SHOULD NOT HAVE WOUND UP INCARCERATED. BECAUSE OF THEIR SITUATION AND BECAUSE OF THEIR ILLNESS, THEY COMMIT OFTEN PETTY CRIMES, VICTIMLESS CRIMES, AND THEY WIND UP INCARCERATED.

SO I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THAT EVERY FEDERAL PRISONER WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS GETS APPROPRIATE TREATMENT.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

>> OTHER COMMENTS?

OTHER ISSUES?

YES.

I THINK OVER -- GINA?

THANK YOU.

>> MY NAME IS ROBERT THISSEL.

I HELPED SOMEONE IN A NURSING HOME.

I FEEL SHE DIDN'T HAVE TO BE IN THERE.

>> THANK YOU.

IS THERE A COMMENT IN THE BACK?

YES, PLEASE.

>> I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE GROUP THAT PUT THIS TOGETHER.

I'M ONE OF THE FORTUNATE ONES THAT HEARD ABOUT THIS.

AND IT WAS A VERY LAST MINUTE THING FOR ME.

AND THEY WORKED ON THIS UNTIL 4:30 IN THE AFTERNOON ON FRIDAY TO SEE THAT I COULD BE HERE.

>> THANK YOU.

THANK YOU FOR THAT COMMENT.

PLEASE, SIR.

>> MY NAME IS ROBERT SNIERSON.

AND I'M THE SELF ADVOCATE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL COALITION
ON SELF DETERMINATION.

I WOULD JUST LIKE TO SPEAK TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO
TELL THEM THAT THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY DID A HUGE
REPORT ABOUT IDEA ENFORCEMENT. AND ACCORDING TO THEIR SURVEY
THAT WAS DONE BY DREAD OF ALL 50 STATES, ARE IN SUBSTANTIAL
NONCOMPLIANCE WITH IDEA.

AND IF THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION IS TRULY SERIOUS ABOUT THE NEEDS
OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN SCHOOLS, THEY'VE GOT TO YANK THE
FUNDING FROM CERTAIN SCHOOLS.

WE CANNOT HAVE A LAW WITH NO TEETH.

THE STATES HAVE TO BE NOTIFIED THAT THIS IS AN IMPORTANT THING
THAT HAS TO BE TAKEN CARE OF.

>> OTHER COMMENTS, PLEASE?

YES. THANK YOU.

>> YES.

MY NAME IS ROBERT JACASI.

AND I WOULD JUST LIKE TO FOLLOW UP ON THAT ALSO.

I PREPARED SOMETHING IN MY ORIGINAL STATEMENT, BUT I LEFT IT OUT
BECAUSE OF THE TIME CONSTRAINTS.

BUT I WAS WANTING TO ADD IS WITH IDEA AS WELL, INDIVIDUALS WITH
DISABILITY EDUCATION ACT, THAT IN INDIAN COUNTRY, WHEN YOU'RE
TALKING ABOUT TRIBAL SCHOOLS, WHEN YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT
ASSESSMENTS THAT ARE CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE -- BECAUSE IN THE

UNITED STATES, I THINK THAT MOST PEOPLE THAT ARE IN SPECIAL
EDUCATION ARE NATIVE AMERICAN CHILDREN.

I KNOW IN THE STATE OF MONTANA AS WELL AS A FEW OTHER ONES THAT
I'M ASKING ABOUT AS WELL.

I THINK THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE EMPHASIS ON MONITORING AND
HELPING PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO GET THOSE DEFICIENCIES
CORRECTED SO OUR CHILDREN THAT GO TO INDIAN SCHOOLS OR TRIBAL
SCHOOLS OR EVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS CAN GET THE ADEQUATE EDUCATION
THAT THEY NEED AND DESERVE, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO
TRANSITION AND WHEN IT COMES TO TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT,
TRANSITION TO HIGHER EDUCATION.

THERE NEEDS TO BE A STRONG, STRONG PUSH TO HELP AND ASSIST THE
TRIBAL SCHOOL, VIA SCHOOLS, WITH THE MONITORING OF THAT.

I LOST MY THOUGHT, SO THAT'S WHERE I'M GOING TO CLOSE FOR NOW.

>> THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

OTHER COMMENTS?

ISSUES?

ARE THERE THINGS THAT YOU HAVE NOT HEARD?

YES, PLEASE.

>> HELLO.

I'M COLLEEN FRASIER FROM NEW JERSEY.

I'VE BEEN LISTENING THIS AFTERNOON AFTER MY COMMENTS AND ALL
MORNING.

AND ONE OF THE THINGS THAT STRIKES ME IS THAT PEOPLE ARE ASKING
FOR ENFORCEMENT.

THE DIFFICULTY WITH ENFORCEMENT IS THAT IT IS INDIVIDUALLY

TRIGGERED.

WE NEED TO LITIGATE TO GET WHAT WE NEED.

AND TO PUT THE ONUS OF LITIGATION ON EACH AND EVERY PERSON WHO ALREADY HAS INCREDIBLE BURDENS AND BARRIERS PLACED IN FRONT OF THEM JUST, THAT DOESN'T WORK.

TO HAVE US NEED TO LITIGATE FOR EVERYTHING -- WE HAVE AN IDEA, THAT'S WONDERFUL.

YOU ASK CONGRESS PEOPLE, THEY'LL SAY, WE HAVE THAT LAW, IT'S A WONDERFUL LAW.

BUT YOUR PARENT NEEDS TO BE IN COURT FOR SEVEN YEARS TO GET WHAT YOU NEEDED IN THE SECOND GRADE.

SO IN ORDER -- WE NEED TO -- I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO THAT, AND I ASSUME THAT YOU FOLKS ARE THE EXPERTS IN THIS AND HOW TO CHANGE IT SO THAT WE ARE NOT INDIVIDUALLY LITIGATING.

IT'S THE LAW OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA SHOULD ENFORCE THE LAW.

AND I THINK THAT IS REALLY A MAJOR BARRIER WHEN IT COMES TO HOW WE GET AT THESE BARRIERS.

YOU CAN GIVE ME THE RIGHT TO SUE, IF I CAN FIND AN ATTORNEY WHO'S WILLING TO DO THAT, IF I HAVE ENOUGH ENERGY TO GET UP IN THE MORNING, DO MY JOB, AND THINK ABOUT DOING THAT, AND IF I HAVE, APPOINTED TO CIRCUIT COURTS AND THINGS LIKE THAT, PEOPLE WHO ARE SYMPATHETIC TO THESE PARTICULAR ISSUES.

SO I THINK THAT WE NEED TO LOOK AT THIS FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE.

I HAVE A RIGHT.

AND I HAVE A RIGHT TO SUE.

BUT THIS ISN'T A CIVIL LITIGATION.

THIS IS MY PRIMARY CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS.

AND I THINK THAT WE REALLY NEED TO LOOK AT THAT FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE.

THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

YES. OVER HERE, PLEASE.

>> MY NAME IS LADONNA FOWLER.

AND I ALSO CUT MY COMMENTS SHORT EARLIER TODAY.

WHAT I WANT TO COMMENT ON IS TRIBES IN THE ADA.

AND I DON'T WANT TO GET INTO REAL DEPTH ABOUT IT,

BUT ONE OF MY CONCERNS IS THAT, IN THE NEW FREEDOM INITIATIVE,

IT TALKS ABOUT SOME ACCESS FOR THE PRIVATE CLUBS AND OR

CHURCHES.

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THAT THE TRIBES ARE INCLUDED IN ANY FUNDING DOLLARS.

BECAUSE OF OUR EXEMPTION UNDER TITLE 1 OF THE ADA, THE TRIBES WERE NOT PART OF ANY -- OF THE PAST ELEVEN YEARS REALLY -- ANY EXERTED EFFORT TO INCLUDE NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

AS TRIBAL MEMBERS, I GUESS I WANT TO JUST STATE THAT WE ARE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES, OR CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES.

WE ARE CITIZENS OF OUR NATIONS AND CITIZENS OF THE STATE THAT WE RESIDE IN.

THERE ARE COMPLEX ISSUES.

AND THAT'S WHY I SAID I DIDN'T REALLY WANT TO GO INTO DEPTH, BUT

I WOULD LIKE TO AT LEAST RAISE THE ISSUE, I GUESS, THAT AS FUNDING DOLLARS AGAIN GO DOWN THAT TRIBES ALSO ACCESS THESE SAME THINGS IN ORDER TO MAKE OUR COMMUNITIES ACCESSIBLE AS WELL.

THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

OTHER COMMENTS?

YES, PLEASE.

>> I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE AN ADDITIONAL COMMENT ABOUT LAGUNA HUNDA AND THE OUTRAGE THAT THE COMMUNITY FEELS ABOUT THIS.

AT A TIME WHEN WE'RE TOLD THAT COMMUNITY SERVICES ARE TOO EXPENSIVE AND THAT NEW PROGRAMS COMING OUT ARE GOING TO BE MORE AND MORE DIFFICULT TO FUND BECAUSE OF REVENUE NEUTRAL SITUATIONS, HERE WE HAVE DEALING WITH A LARGE NURSING HOME THAT'S INCREASING BY WHAT I UNDERSTAND TO BE NEARLY 50%, AND WHAT WE ALSO UNDERSTAND IS GOING TO BE A \$300 A DAY PER PERSON FACILITY.

I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU, DON'T YOU THINK THAT \$300 A DAY COULD BE SPENT PER PERSON IN LAGUNA HONDA, THAT THAT COULD BE SPENT FOR THEM IN THE COMMUNITY?

THANK YOU

>> THANK YOU FOR THAT COMMENT.

ARE THERE OTHER COMMENTS?

AND AGAIN, I WOULD ENCOURAGE THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE SPENT THE DAY LISTENING TO THESE WONDERFUL REMARKS, IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD ANY THOUGHTS OR OBSERVATIONS, FEEL FREE.

YES, PLEASE.

>> I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK.
I WAS OUT SO THIS MAY HAVE BEEN SAID, BUT I KIND OF WANT TO
SPEAK ON THE ISSUE OF TIME LINES AND TIME LINES BEING MET.
THE EXECUTIVE ORDER HAD MENTIONED SOMETHING LIKE 120 DAYS THAT,
YOU KNOW, THERE WOULD BE POLICIES IMPLEMENTED.
SO I ENCOURAGE THAT ALL THE TIME LINES THAT WE'RE GIVING, THAT
THESE TIME LINES BE MET AS WELL AS THE ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES
AND LAWS THAT ARE ALREADY ON THE BOOKS FOR PERSONAL ATTENDANT
SERVICES BE PRETTY MUCH STEPPED UP AND MONITORED MORE
FREQUENTLY.
THAT'S ALL.

>> THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

MR. GRAHAM, I SEE YOU IN THE BACK, BUT BEFORE I GO TO YOU
PLEASE, I THINK I'M PROBABLY NOT THE ONLY ONE IN THE ROOM TO
NOTICE THAT HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SECRETARY TOMMY THOMPSON
HAS JUST JOINED US.

SO I WOULD LIKE TO PAUSE AND JUST SAY, MR. SECRETARY, THAT IT'S
AN HONOR TO HAVE YOU HERE WITH US TODAY.

I KNOW THAT THESE ARE VERY IMPORTANT ISSUES TO YOU.

AND I THINK EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT IN YOUR ROLE AS SECRETARY AND
IN YOUR PREVIOUS ROLE AS GOVERNOR, YOU SPENT A LOT OF TIME
TALKING TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, THEIR ADVOCATES, AND
PROVIDERS, TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE ISSUES AND THEIR
PERSPECTIVES.

I KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE SOME CONCLUDING STATEMENT AT THE END
OF THE DAY, BUT ARE THERE ANY WORDS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE

WITH US AT THIS POINT?

>> WELL, FIRST, LARRY, LET ME APOLOGIZE TO YOU AND TO ALL OF THE INDIVIDUALS HERE FOR MY TARDINESS, BUT I'VE BEEN ON CAPITOL HILL MOST OF THE DAY TALKING ABOUT -- TESTIFYING.

I WAS THE WITNESS ON EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH AND HOW WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO USE THE NEW RESEARCH TO DEVELOP NEW THERAPIES AND SO ON, SOMETHING THAT EVERYBODY IS VITALLY INTERESTED IN.

SO I APOLOGIZE THAT I WAS UP THERE AND NOT HERE.

I'M JUST PLEASED THAT THEY LET ME GO SO I COULD GET HERE NOW AND TALK TO YOU.

SECONDLY, LARRY, I'VE HEARD THAT YOU HAVE JUST DONE A STELLAR JOB.

IN FACT, SOMEBODY SAID THAT YOU HAVEN'T EVEN TAKEN TIME FOR A BATHROOM BREAK.

THEY'RE WONDERING HOW YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO DO THAT.

SO I THINK BEFORE ANYBODY ELSE, WE OWE YOU A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR THE TREMENDOUS JOB THAT YOU'VE DONE.

(APPLAUSE) .

AND I WOULD LIKE TO LISTEN FOR A WHILE, AND THEN I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS, IF THAT'S OKAY, LARRY.

>> ABSOLUTELY.

WE'RE DELIGHTED THAT YOU'RE HERE.

AND JUST TO GIVE YOU A FIX, WE HAVE GONE THROUGH, I THINK, A VERY RICH DAY OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY.

>> THAT'S WHAT I UNDERSTAND.

>> WE'RE IN THE OPEN MIC SESSION NOW.

AND MR. GRAHAM, I'M GOING TO COME TO YOU, PLEASE.

>> JUST TO CARRY ON MY THOUGHTS EARLIER ABOUT THE ADA, UNTIL IT IS THOUGHT OF AND PRESSED AND PUSHED AND REALLY HAMMERED INTO SOME PEOPLE'S HEAD THAT IT'S A CIVIL RIGHTS ACT, WE'RE NOT GOING TO MOVE ANYWHERE.

THAT IS THE BARRIER.

THAT'S THE ONLY BARRIER THERE IS IN MY MIND.

THE YOUNG LADY SPOKE EARLIER ABOUT IDEA AND HOW YOU CAN, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO LITIGATE AND SO FORTH AND SO ON.

AND SHE ALSO MADE ONE SMALL COMMENT -- I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAUGHT IT -- THAT IT DEPENDS ON WHAT CIRCUIT YOU'RE IN.

WELL, THERE'S A VERY REAL FEAR.

AGAIN, I TOUCH BACK ON OLMSTEAD AND WHAT HAPPENED A FEW YEARS AGO, AND HOW GOVERNORS AND NOW PRESIDENTS SUPPORTED AND WHAT SIDE THEY TOOK ON THAT.

THERE'S NOW A PERSON, JEFFERY SUTTON, WHO ARGUED IN OLMSTEAD AGAINST US.

HE'S NOW UP FOR A CIRCUITSHIP.

AND AGAIN, WHEN WE COME BACK, WE'RE HERE TO LISTEN, BUT ON ONE HAND TO GET INTO THE COMMUNITY, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, IT WAS DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED TO THIS.

AND BY ACTIONS RECENTLY, BY JEFFERY SUTTON'S NAME BEING BROUGHT UP TO GO INTO A CIRCUIT SHIP, AGAIN, WE'RE HEARING WORDS ON ONE HAND, BUT THEN AGAIN THE ACTIONS SEEM TO GO AGAINST US.

THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU, MR. GRAHAM.

OTHER COMMENTS?

YES.

RIGHT OVER HERE PLEASE.

WE'LL GET A MIC TO YOU.

>> GOOD AFTERNOON.

MY NAME IS KINIKE BERMUDEZ.

AND I THANK YOU, SECRETARY, FOR BEING HERE.

I SPOKE EARLIER.

I AM A CONSUMER OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, AND I SERVE AS A BOARD MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, AND WAS HONORED TO SERVE ON THE SURGEON GENERAL'S WORK GROUP ON CULTURAL, RACE, AND ETHNICITY THAT WAS JUST RELEASED LAST WEEK.

THERE'S A GROWING POPULATION OF AAPI COMMUNITIES, 43 ETHNIC GROUPS OF WHICH LANGUAGE, CULTURE, REGIONALIZATION, LANGUAGE, YOU NAME IT, IS AN ISSUE.

AND THE MAJOR BARRIER TO ACCESS AND SERVICES IS LANGUAGE.

THE NEED FOR BICULTURAL, BILINGUAL, LITERATURE, EDUCATION, IN A SURVEY THAT WAS CONDUCTED WHEN CMHS HELPED US BRING TOGETHER CONSUMERS LAST YEAR IN NASHVILLE FOR A LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, THEY IDENTIFIED FOUR MAJOR THINGS THAT ARE OF IMPORTANCE.

FAMILIES ARE A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF HEALING AND RECOVERY, ESPECIALLY WHEN A LOT OF THOSE PEOPLE LEFT THEIR FAMILIES IN CAMBODIA, IN LAOS, IN VIETNAM AND ACROSS THE SOUTH PACIFIC.

BILINGUAL, BICULTURAL SERVICES TO HELP WITH THE SHAME AND

STIGMA.

I'M HERE TO SPEAK TODAY AND I WAS BORN IN BROOKLYN.

MY FAMILY OF HERITAGE IS FILIPINO.

BUT THE PEOPLE WHO NEED TO BE HERE, AND THE STORIES YOU NEED TO
HERE ARE THOSE WHO, BECAUSE OF THE SHAME AND STIGMA, COULD NOT
BE HERE.

SO I'M HOPING AS THE EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION THAT THIS FREEDOM
INITIATIVE IS NOT JUST A TALK, BUT THAT IF YOU'RE GOING TO TALK
THAT WE'RE ACTUALLY GOING TO WALK THE TALK.

IT'S BEEN TOO LONG.

I DON'T WANT TO BE PART OF CIVIL ISSUES AND SUING, BECAUSE THAT
IS NOT PART OF OUR CULTURE.

WE DON'T GO AROUND LITIGATING.

WE WOULD RATHER PUT OUR HEAD UNDER THE PILLOW AND DIMINISH AND
GO AWAY IF WE COULD.

AND THE OTHER NEED IS THE NEED FOR PEER SUPPORT IN A LANGUAGE,
IN OUR CULTURE, IN A SYSTEM THAT WANTS -- IN A CULTURE THAT
WANTS TO WORK.

WE HAVE A POPULATION OF PEOPLE THAT WANT TO WORK,
BUT BECAUSE OF POST TRAUMATIC STRESS, BECAUSE OF ANXIETY,
BECAUSE OF DEPRESSION, BECAUSE OF ISSUES SURROUNDING THEIR
EMOTIONAL STABILITY, AND THE WAR, AND WHAT BROUGHT THEM TO THE
UNITED STATES, IT'S IMPORTANT TO LOOK AT HOW WE NEED TO HELP
THIS POPULATION.

53% ARE MONGS, 40% ARE CAMBODIANS, 32% OF LAOSIANS HAVE
HOUSEHOLDS OF LESS THAN \$15,000 ANNUALLY.

WE CANNOT LIVE AND DO WHAT WE NEED TO TAKE CARE OF THE PEOPLE UNLESS THERE IS EDUCATION THAT IS CULTURALLY, APPROPRIATELY SENSITIVE AND LINGUISTICALLY AVAILABLE SO THAT HEALING AND RECOVERY CAN BE PART OF WHAT WE NEED TO BECOME NEW CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES.

>> THANK YOU, MS. BERMUDEZ.

MR. FORSCYTHE?

KATHY, PLEASE.

>> THANK YOU.

YOU KNOW I SPOKE BEFORE.

AND MY COMMENTS WILL BE DIRECTED TO THE SECRETARY PRIMARILY.

MY NAME IS LYNN FORSCYTHE. AND I LIVE IN PILMIRA, RIGHT OUTSIDE OF CHARLOTTESVILLE.

AND I HAVE A SON THAT IS BRAIN INJURED.

I WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THE LACK OF COMMUNITY LIFE ASSISTANCE, FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE TRAUMATICALLY BRAIN INJURED.

MY SON IS TOTALLY DISABLED.

HE WILL NOT WORK AGAIN.

MY WIFE AND I RECEIVE THAT DREADED PHONE CALL, A CAR ACCIDENT.

HAVING APPLIED FOR VIRGINIA MEDICAID, GREG WAS DENIED THAT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BECAUSE OF THE MEAGER \$330.00 PER MONTH INCOME THAT'S THE CLIP LEVEL IN VIRGINIA.

EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM KNOWS THE HUGE COST OF CARE FOR ANYONE THAT'S DISABLED.

THAT \$330.00 IS A JOKE.

IT'S A BARRIER, AND IT'S PUT THERE TO DENY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

IT MIGHT AS WELL BE \$3.30.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

I MEAN, YOU CAN GO TO A DOCTOR'S OFFICE AND GET A COUPLE X-RAYS
AND IT'S \$300.00.

NEVER MIND TRYING TO TAKE CARE OF A DISABLED PERSON WITH THAT
KIND OF MONEY.

THE INCOME THAT HE DOES GET, EVERY SINGLE CENT OF IT, GOES
TOWARD HIS PARTIAL ROOM AND BOARD AT THE JOHN JANE BRAIN INJURY
CENTER IN CHARLOTTESVILLE.

THAT LEAVES GREG ZERO MONEY FOR ANY TYPE OF MEDICAL EXPENSES,
RATHER IT'S MEDICATIONS, DOCTORS, X-RAYS.

YOU NAME IT, HE HAS NO MONEY FOR THAT.

AND AS I SAID, THE MONEY HE DOES RECEIVE FROM SOCIAL SECURITY
GOES TOWARD PART OF HIS ROOM AND BOARD.

I HAVE FOUND NO AGENCY IN THE STATE OF VIRGINIA THAT IS WILLING
TO PROVIDE COMMUNITY LIFE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

AND I'VE BEEN THROUGH RICHMOND AND A NUMBER OF OTHER AGENCIES.

THEY DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT TBI.

THEY WILL TALK ABOUT OTHER TYPES OF DISABILITIES BUT NOT TBI.

I HAVE BEEN TO THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR RIGHTS FOR VIRGINIANS
WITH DISABILITIES AND HAVE BEEN DENIED.

AND THAT'S AN EFFICACY GROUP.

SO WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE THEY THERE FOR?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT?

I SIMPLY DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY THEY EXIST.

AS I SAID, AT THE PRESENT TIME, GREG IS IN THE JOHN JANE BRAIN

INJURY CENTER.

IT IS A MODEL FOR COMMUNITY LIVING.

THEY ARE EXCELLENT, WHAT THEY HAVE SET UP THERE, UNDER THE
DIRECTION OF DR. ZITNEY.

THEY ARE AT RISK OF CLOSING THEIR DOORS BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

WHY?

BECAUSE GREG AND OTHERS CANNOT GET FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH
MEDICAID.

AND WITH ALL RESPECT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY
ADMINISTRATION, APPARENTLY THEY WOULD RATHER PAY MORE MONEY TO
HAVE GREG IN AN INSTITUTION THAN IN COMMUNITY LIVING.

>> WHY?

AGAIN, SOMEBODY NEEDS TO WAKE UP.

AND SOMEONE APPARENTLY NEEDS TO GET SHAKEN A LITTLE BIT AND COME
TO THEIR SENSES.

THE COMMUNITY LIFE IS THE WAY TO GO.

IT'S FAR CHEAPER THAN AN INSTITUTION.

THE RATE AT THE JOHN JANE BRAIN INJURY CENTER FOR ROOM, BOARD,
AND SERVICES, THERAPIES, OT/PT, SPEECH, YOU NAME IT, IS \$4200 A
MONTH.

ONE OF A SIMILAR PLACE IN CONNECTICUT WAS \$6600 A MONTH. AND A
PLACE IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA WAS \$7100 A MONTH.

THAT MODEL COMMUNITY, THE JOHN JANE BRAIN INJURY CENTER, NEEDS
TO BE LOOKED AT AND FUNDED APPROPRIATELY.

IT'S A VERY GOOD EXAMPLE OF WHAT CAN BE DONE A LOT CHEAPER.

IN SUMMARY, IF THEY CLOSE UP, IT'S GOING TO COST VIRGINIA A LOT

MORE THAN IT DOES TODAY.

AND ITEM TWO IS, IT'S OBVIOUS PRESIDENT BUSH'S EXECUTIVE ORDER HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN THE STATE OF VIRGINIA.

AND LIKEWISE, IT'S A CLEAR CASE OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST TBI.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMENTS, AND PLEASE ACT ON THE DISPARITY BETWEEN AN INSTITUTION AND COMMUNITY LIVING.

>> THANK YOU AGAIN, MR. FORSCYTHE.

YES.

OVER HERE, PLEASE.

>> MY NAME IS BERNARD.

I LIVE IN NEW JERSEY.

THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME COME TODAY TO SPEAK ABOUT BARRIERS IN INDEPENDENT LIVING AND PEOPLE WHO GET THEIR SUPPORT FROM FEDERAL PROGRAMS.

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, MY MOTHER COULDN'T AFFORD TO HELP ME AS MUCH AS SHE WANTED, SO SHE PUT ME IN THE INSTITUTION SETTING.

WHEN I WENT IN THE INSTITUTION SETTING, THEY TOLD ME WHAT TO DO AND WHAT NOT TO DO.

SO FOR ME, IT DIDN'T SEEM LIKE I HAD ANY RIGHTS AND NO DEPENDENCE.

NOW, I LIVE IN THE COMMUNITY.

NOW I COULD BE INDEPENDENT.

BUT I STILL HAVE SOME BARRIERS.

AND I WAIT, AND I WAITED ALL DAY TO TALK TO THIS MAN THAT THEY SAID HE WOULD HELP ME.

SO I HOPE YOU HELP ME GET MY BARRIERS FREE.

AND IN THE COMMUNITY, THEY SAY YOU'RE ONLY ALLOWED TO HAVE SO MUCH HELP, SO MUCH HELP IN THE SUPERVISED DEPARTMENTS.

I NEED A LITTLE BIT MORE HELP THAN THAT BECAUSE I NEED, WHEN I GO TO THE DOCTORS, SOMEBODY TO DRIVE ME TO MY DOCTORS, AND TO HELP ME CLEAN AND COOK, AND TAKE ME TO SOME OF MY FRIENDS, AND HELP ME DO SOME OF MY ACTIVITIES THAT I WOULD LIKE TO DO.

AND THEN I HAVE OTHER PROGRAMS LIKE THIS I'M HAVING TODAY.

SO I REALLY NEED THE SAME HELP SUPPORT THAT I HAD IN THE INSTITUTION.

AND I'M NOT YET BARRIER FREE.

I'VE BEEN WORKING ON, FOR MONTHS AND MONTHS AND MONTHS WITH MY MEDICAID.

THEY REFUSE TO HELP ME WITH MY ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIR.

SO I HOPE HIS MAN COULD REALLY HELP ME MAKE THIS BARRIER FREE.

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING TO ME.

IT'S VERY INDEPENDENT FOR ME TO GET ON MY OWN.

THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU.

AND MR. WILLIAMS, PLEASE.

>> CAN YOU HEAR THIS?

>> YES.

>> MR. SECRETARY, I SPOKE EARLIER AND WAS ASKED TO REPEAT MYSELF.

SO FOR YOUR BENEFIT, I APOLOGIZE TO OTHERS FOR BEING REDUNDANT.

BUT REDUNDANCY HAS ITS NAME, ESPECIALLY IN THIS TOWN.

I AM BOB WILLIAMS, A SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR AT UNITED CEREBRAL

PALSY HERE IN WASHINGTON.

FOR THE RECORD, I ALSO HELD TWO POSITIONS UNDER SECRETARY SHALLALA DURING THE CLINTON YEARS, FIRST AS THE COMMISSIONER OF THE ADMINISTRATION ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND THEN AN SP, HEADING IT'S OFFICE ON DISABILITY, AGING, AND LONG-TERM CARE POLICY.

WE APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE BRIEF INPUT BEFORE YOU NOW AND WILL SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS AS WELL.

LIKE YOU, I GOT UP THIS MORNING AT BREAKFAST, WENT TO THE BEDROOM, SHOWERED, SHAVED, DRESSED, AND STARTED MY DAY, ALL PRETTY MUCH WITHOUT GIVING IT A SECOND THOUGHT.

I'M ABLE TO DO THIS BECAUSE I AM EXTREMELY FORTUNATE TO HAVE A WIFE WHO IS THERE EVERYDAY, BOTH IN THE MORNING AND AGAIN AT NIGHT TO LEND ME A HAND WHEN I NEED IT THE MOST.

BUT THIS MORNING, LIKE EVERY OTHER MORNING, THERE WERE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WHO WOKE UP AND WANTED TO GET OUT OF BED BUT COULDN'T BECAUSE THERE WAS NO ONE THERE TO HELP THEM. MOREOVER, MANY WERE PROBABLY UP HALF THE NIGHT WORRYING THIS MIGHT HAPPEN BECAUSE, FRANKLY, IT HAS SO MANY TIMES BEFORE.

WHILE MANY FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO THIS, THE MAIN ONE IS SIMPLE ECONOMICS.

BECAUSE REGARDLESS OF THE STATE OR REGION, MOST COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES WORKERS ARE EXPECTED TO DO THEIR JOBS AT POVERTY LEVEL WAGES, OFTEN WITHOUT HEALTH COVERAGE OR EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS, AND WITH LITTLE TO NO OPPORTUNITY FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, THERE IS AN EVER INCREASING SHORTAGE OF THESE

WORKERS, AND THOSE WHO DO REMAIN ARE FORCED TO WORK OVERTIME. THIS RESULTS IN TURNOVER RATES OF 100% AMONG MANY PROVIDER AGENCIES, INCREASED INCIDENCES OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT, AND COUNTLESS INCIDENCES WHERE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE LEFT, OFTEN IN THEIR OWN WASTE, BECAUSE THEIR ATTENDANT SHOWS UP LATE THAT DAY OR NOT AT ALL.

THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES AND THE VERY LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, THEREFORE, HINGES ON OUR ABILITY TO BEGIN TO REMEDY THIS NATIONAL CRISIS IMMEDIATELY. TO THEIR CREDIT, SEVERAL STATES HAVE USED THEIR OWN FUNDS TO CREATE A LIVING WAGE FOR SOME MEDICAID COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE WORKERS AND GREATER ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE COVERAGE.

IT'S TIME THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT STARTS TO PROVIDE SOME LEADERSHIP AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES OF ITS OWN.

THERE ARE THREE THINGS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION COULD DO TO SHOW SOME LEADERSHIP IN THIS REGARD.

FIRST, WORK WITH CONGRESS, GOVERNORS, THE DISABILITY AND AGING COMMUNITIES TO FIND WAYS TO INCREASE THE EARNINGS OF THESE WORKERS.

IF WE TRULY VALUE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES BEING IN THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY, WE MUST VALUE AND COMPENSATE THOSE WHO MAKE IT POSSIBLE.

SECOND, SENATOR DURBIN HAS DRAFTED A BILL ENTITLED, "THE CARE GIVERS ACCESS TO INSURANCE ACT" THAT WOULD EXTEND BASIC HEALTH CARE COVERAGE TO COMMUNITY SERVICES WORKERS AND THOSE IN RELATED FIELDS.

SUPPORT THE BILL, OR PROPOSE AN EQUALLY EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO IT.

AND FINALLY, THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD TAKE THE SAME APPROACH TO MI CASA, WHICH WOULD GUARANTEE EQUAL ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SERVICES.

EITHER SUPPORT THE BILL IN ITS CURRENT FORM, OR GIVE THE NATION AN ADA ANNIVERSARY PRESENT BY PROPOSING OTHER REFORMS TO ACHIEVE THE SAME AIM BY JULY 26TH OF NEXT YEAR.

THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU, BOB.

OTHER COMMENTS?

YES, OVER HERE PLEASE.

AND THEN WE'LL GO OVER TO...

OKAY, GO AHEAD.

HOWARD?

>> THANK YOU.

HOWARD BEDLIN WITH THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE AGING.

MR. SECRETARY, I WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE TODAY AND FOR HOLDING THIS MEETING.

AND WE FEEL THAT IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING.

WE'RE VERY EXCITED ABOUT WORKING WITH YOU ON THESE ISSUES.

WE WERE THRILLED WHEN YOU WERE APPOINTED, GIVEN THE EXPERIENCE THAT YOU'VE HAD IN WISCONSIN, ARGUABLY ONE OF THE BEST, IF NOT THE BEST STATE IN THE NATION WITH REGARD TO HOME AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND SENIORS.

I WANTED TO FOCUS BRIEFLY ON TWO AREAS.

ONE IS THAT WE NEED TO FOCUS ON THE MEDICAID PROGRAM, WHICH YOU KNOW VERY WELL.

AND SECOND IS THE NEED FOR COLLABORATION TO COME UP WITH CREATIVE SOLUTIONS.

IN MY VIEW, AND I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THESE ISSUES NOW FOR TWENTY YEARS, MEDICAID IS THE BIGGEST PROBLEM THAT WE'VE GOT BECAUSE OUR LONG-TERM CARE SYSTEM IN THIS NATION IS BROKEN.

MILLIONS AND MILLIONS OF FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS ARE SUFFERING UNNECESSARILY.

WE HAVE THE RESOURCES.

WE NEED TO STRUCTURE THE INCENTIVES PROPERLY.

WE NEED TO WORK VERY CLOSELY WITH THE STATES.

AND WE NEED TO FOCUS ON MEDICAID, WHICH YOU'RE BEGINNING TO DO.

AND AGAIN, I THINK THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT START.

THERE IS A HUGE INSTITUTIONAL BIAS IN THE MEDICAID PROGRAM.

THERE HAVE BEEN A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF VERY GOOD IDEAS THAT HAVE COME OUT TODAY.

SO FOCUS ON MEDICAID, SOMETHING THAT WE REALLY THINK IS CRITICAL.

SECOND, IS THE NEED FOR COLLABORATION.

WE NEED TO BRING ALL OF THE STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER, REPRESENTATIVES OF SENIORS, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, THE ADMINISTRATION, FOLKS ON THE HILL, PROVIDERS, AND THE GOVERNORS, REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE STATES.

BECAUSE IF WE PUT ALL THOSE PEOPLE TOGETHER IN THE ROOM, WE CAN GET CONSENSUS, AND WE CAN DEVELOP POLICIES THAT WILL SAVE MONEY

IF WE LOOK AT TOTAL HEALTH SYSTEM'S SPENDING.
SOME OF THEM MIGHT COST A LITTLE BIT, AND WE VERY MUCH WANT TO
WORK WITH YOU ON THAT AND ARE VERY EXCITED.
THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING.
AND THANK YOU AGAIN.
>> THANK YOU.
>> TOM, DID YOU HAVE -- SOMEONE OVER THERE?
PLEASE.
>> HELLO.
MY NAME IS NEIL ELLIS.
I WANT TO THANK YOU, MR. SECRETARY, AND THIS PANEL, FOR THE
OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TODAY.
I WOULD LIKE TO PUT MY STATEMENT IN A CONTEXT THAT PERHAPS YOU
COULD RELATE TO.
FIFTEEN YEARS AGO I WAS MARRIED.
I HAD A SIX FIGURE INCOME.
I OWNED THREE HOUSES.
I VACATIONED IN EUROPE, ATE AT FINE RESTAURANTS.
I HAD IT MADE.
>> IT WOULD IMPRESS ME A LOT MORE IF YOU VACATIONED IN
WISCONSIN.
>> I'M SORRY?
OH, OKAY.
AT ANY RATE, I BASICALLY, I HAD IT MADE.
I WAS BASICALLY A BONA FIDE REAGANOMICS 1980'S QUISINART YUPPY.
BUT I DEVELOPED MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS.

I BECAME A DISABLED PERSON.

IN THE PROCESS I LOST MY JOB, MY ABILITY TO WORK, MY WIFE, MY
HOUSED, MY RESTAURANTS, MY VACATIONS.

I LOST EVERYTHING.

NOW, I LIVE AT A POVERTY LEVEL ON SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY.

I LIVE IN AN ELDERLY HOUSING PROJECT IN A 500 SQUARE FOOT
APARTMENT.

BUT FOR THAT I AM THANKFUL.

NOW, THAT MAY SOUND STRANGE, THAT I WOULD FEEL THANKFUL FOR A
500 SQUARE FOOT APARTMENT AND LIVING AT A POVERTY TWELVE INCOME.

BUT I LOOK AROUND ME AT MY BROTHERS AND MY SISTERS IN THE
DISABILITY COMMUNITY, AND I SEE HOMELESS PEOPLE.

I SEE PEOPLE LIVING IN INSTITUTIONS AND IN NURSING HOMES.

THAT MAKES ME FEEL THANKFUL FOR WHAT I HAVE.

BUT I'M VERY AFRAID.

I HAVE A DEGENERATIVE DISEASE.

IT IS PROGRESSIVE.

IT GETS WORST, AND IT ONLY GOES IN ONE DIRECTION.

AND I FEAR IS THAT THE NEXT STEP FOR ME, IF I CAN'T HAVE
ATTENDANT CARE WHEN I NEED IT IN MY HOME, I WILL BE
INSTITUTIONALIZED.

AND WHAT I WILL LOSE THEN, IT'S THE LAST THING THAT I HAVE, MY
FREEDOM.

AS MUCH AS I HAVE LOST TO DATE, I STILL HAVE MORE TO LOSE.

THANK YOU.

>> CLAUDIA, TO YOU, PLEASE.

>> HI.

MY NAME IS MARILYN KING.

THIS IS EFFY KING, MY MOTHER.

AND THIS IS MY NIECE, JILL.

EFFIE SPOKE EARLIER SAYING SHE DID NOT WANT TO GO TO A NURSING HOME AND DID NOT WANT TO SEE HER GRANDDAUGHTER GO TO A NURSING HOME.

BUT SHE'S WORRIED ABOUT ME BECAUSE I'M TAKING CARE OF THEM FULL-TIME WITHOUT ANY HELP AT HOME

IN TENNESSEE, THERE IS NO HELP FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE, THAT I KNOW OF, IN THE HOME.

AND MY NIECE IS ON THE MEDICAID WAIVER BUT DOESN'T HAVE A PERSONAL ASSISTANT, EVEN THOUGH SHE'S AUTHORIZED FOR ONE.

WE HAVE SEEN THE CONCERNS OF FAMILIES, THE OTHER FAMILIES EXPRESSED IN TENNESSEE, HAVE TO DO WITH A LOT OF MONEY BEING SPENT TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES AND ADMINISTRATION, BUT NOT GETTING TO MEET THE REAL PRACTICAL NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE.

SO WE WOULD LIKE TO ENCOURAGE YOU TO RE-EVALUATE THE POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT AND LOOK AT MAKING IT MORE CONSUMER CONTROL, TO THE EXTENT OF HAVING FAMILIES INVOLVED IN EMPLOYMENT, INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE DISABILITIES, AND PEOPLE WHO HAVE A BACKGROUND OF LIVING WITH A DISABILITY FOR A PERIOD OF TIME THAT MAY GIVE THEM A QUALIFICATION THAT CAN'T BE EARNED WITH SIMPLY A COLLEGE DEGREE.

WE WOULD LIKE TO ALSO ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONSIDER FEDERAL STANDARDS THAT MIGHT MAKE IT LESS LIKELY PEOPLE WOULD ENCOUNTER

BARRIERS COMING FROM STATE TO STATE.

LIKE WHEN WE CAME HERE, WE WERE TOLD THAT MY NIECE COULDN'T HAVE A PERSONAL ASSISTANT THAT WOULD CROSS THE STATE LINE OR ANY HELP ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STATE LINE EVEN, IF SHE HAD A PERSONAL ASSISTANT AT ALL.

AND WE WERE THREATENED THAT IF WE MOVED FROM, IF WE LEAVE TENNESSEE TO GET HELP FOR MY MOM AND TAKE MY NIECE, THAT WE CAN'T HAVE RE-ENTRY INTO THE STATE.

WE THINK SOME CIVIL RIGHTS MIGHT BE VIOLATED JUST BY THE NATURE OF THE WAY THE STATES IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAMS.

AND WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BE MORE INVOLVED IN SETTING SOME STANDARDS SO THAT STATES CAN'T TAKE AWAY THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE.

AND WE WOULD LIKE TO ALSO ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE A PREVENTATIVE APPROACH.

MY OTHER, FOR EXAMPLE, WITH THE PARKINSON'S DISEASE FOR OVER 22 YEARS, HAS SURVIVED THE LAST FOUR MAINTAINED ON ALMOST NO MEDICATION AT ALL, ON NO PHARMACEUTICAL MEDICATION.

WE HAVE HAD TO GO TO OTHER COUNTRIES TO GET REMEDIES THAT ARE NOT COVERED, OF COURSE, BY ANY INSURANCE AND THAT ARE NOT EVEN THOROUGHLY RESEARCH, AS WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THEM BE IN THIS COUNTRY.

I ALSO HAVE TO AGONIZE THIS, DAILY I HEAR HER CRY OUT IN PAIN BECAUSE SHE CAN'T GET A CUSHION OR A MATTRESS THAT WOULD ALLEVIATE THAT PAIN FROM MEDICARE BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T HAVE OPEN SORES.

SHE DOESN'T QUALIFY FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY, WHICH WOULD HELP
RETARD THE PROGRESSION OF THIS DEBILITATING DISEASE.
SHE ALSO CAN'T HAVE DENTURES.
AND SHE'S HAVING TROUBLE MAINTAINING NUTRITIONAL LEVELS WITHOUT
BEING ABLE TO CHEW WELL.
BUT DENTURES AREN'T INCLUDED, AS I UNDERSTAND, WITH MEDICARE.
AND A CHAIR.
AS YOU NOTICE NOW, HER HEAD WON'T LIFT UP.
SHE CAN'T SEE THE REST OF THE WORLD.
THERE IS A CHAIR THAT CAN MAKE THAT POSSIBLE PUT IT'S NOT
COVERED BY MEDICARE.
SO WE WOULD LIKE TO ENCOURAGE A PREVENTATIVE APPROACH, IN
PREVENTING PROBLEMS AS WELL IN THE SYSTEMS.
I THINK PART OF THAT COULD BE DONE BY, AGAIN, HAVING PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES INVOLVED IN SETTING UP
PROCEDURES AND IN MONITORING, SO THAT WE DON'T HAVE TO SPEND SO
MUCH MONEY GOING BACK AND TRYING TO CLEAN UP PROBLEMS AFTER THEY
OCCUR.
SO THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE HERE.
>> THANK YOU.
WE'RE GOING TO TAKE ONE MORE COMMENT, AND WE'LL COME OVER HERE
FOR IT.
AND THEN WE'LL MOVE TO CONCLUDING REMARKS.
PLEASE.
>> GOOD AFTERNOON, MR. SECRETARY.
I WISH YOU COULD HAVE BEEN HERE ALL DAY.

I MEAN, JUST HEARING FROM THIS WONDERFUL WOMAN -- AND I'VE BEEN
HERE SINCE EARLY THIS MORNING.

AND I THINK MOST OF THE PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM, I MEAN, YOUR HEARTS
ARE KIND OF, YOU KNOW, TORN APART BY ALL OF THE HEART WRENCHING
STORIES.

AND I JUST APPRECIATE SO MANY OF YOU COMING FROM THROUGHOUT THE
UNITED STATES TO BE ABLE TO TELL YOUR OWN PERSONAL INDIVIDUAL
STORY.

THERE WAS ONE WOMAN HERE TODAY WHO LIVED IN A RURAL AREA AND
DIDN'T HAVE ELECTRICITY.

AND I WAS THINKING, WELL, HOW DID SHE KNOW TO BE ABLE TO COME
HERE?

ANYHOW, MY NAME IS MARCIA NUSKART, AND I REPRESENT THE COALITION
TO PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

AND JUST AS HOWARD MENTIONED, THAT THERE'S BEEN PROBLEMS IN THE
LONG-TERM CARE ARENA, THERE ARE ALSO PROBLEMS IN THE HOME HEALTH
CARE ARENA, TOO.

THERE'S A SERIOUS BARRIER THAT DOES EXIST FOR MEDICARE
BENEFICIARIES WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH THE CMS AND IT'S
SUBCONTRACTORS, THE DEMARKS, WITH THEIR OVERLY RESTRICTIVE
INTERPRETATION OF THE IN THE PATIENT'S HOME CRITERIA THAT'S
INCLUDED IN THEIR MEDICARE COVERAGE POLICIES.

I MENTIONED THIS -- AND THERE WAS A NUMBER OF OTHER PEOPLE TODAY
THAT MENTIONED THIS PARTICULAR SITUATION. THIS RESTRICTIVE
INTERPRETATION LITERALLY MAKES PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES REALLY
PRISONERS IN THEIR OWN HOUSES AND HOMES.

AND THEY'RE PREVENTED FROM LEADING WHOLE AND PRODUCTIVE LIVES IN THE COMMUNITY AND IN THE WORK PLACE.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WE HAD MADE, YOU KNOW, BOTH IN OUR WRITTEN COMMENTS THAT WERE ALREADY SUBMITTED HERE IS SOMETHING THAT YOU CAN DO NOW, WHICH WOULD BE A WIN/WIN FOR EVERYBODY AND WOULD PROVIDE AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE. THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES WOULD IMMEDIATELY UNDERTAKE TO REPLACE THE, QUOTE, UNQUOTE, USED IN THE PATIENT'S HOME INTERPRETATION, THROUGH AN ADMINISTRATIVE RELIEF, ADMINISTRATIVE RELIEF IN THE FORM OF A PROGRAM MEMORANDUM IN ITS PLACE THAT SHOULD BE A STANDARD OF MEDICAL NEED FOR WHEELCHAIRS AND OTHER MOBILITY DEVICES THAT WOULD ALLOW THE PERSON TO BE PRODUCTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY AND IN THE WORK FORCE.

AND WE WOULD LOVE TO BE ABLE TO WORK WITH YOU ON THIS IN THE FUTURE.

THANK YOU SO MUCH.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COMMENTS.

I WOULD LIKE TO TRANSITION US INTO THE FINAL SESSION, WHERE WE PROVIDE CONCLUDING REMARKS, BY TURNING THE FLOOR OVER TO THE GENTLEMAN THAT OPENED THE MEETING, IT SEEMS LIKE, SOME TIME AGO. AND THAT IS HHS DEPUTY SECRETARY, CLAUDE ALLEN.

>> THANK YOU, LARRY.

I THINK -- LET ME MAKE SURE WE'RE ON.

YES WE ARE.

GIVE LARRY BARTLETT A HAND FOR LEADING US THROUGH A TREMENDOUS DAY.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP TODAY.

AS I SAT HERE THROUGHOUT THE DAY, I CAME AND I LEFT, I CAME AND I LEFT.

I'VE BEEN IN AND OUT.

AND WHAT I'VE BEEN STRUCK BY IS -- AND IT'S A REAL CHALLENGE EVEN STANDING UP HERE TO ASK, YOU KNOW, HOW DO WE TRANSLATE THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE SHARED YOUR INDIVIDUAL PAIN, YOUR INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGES, YOUR TRIUMPHS, THE THINGS THAT ARE AFFECTING YOU ON A DAILY BASIS, HOW DO WE TAKE THAT AND TRANSITION IN INTO A PLAN OF ACTION?

AND THAT'S REALLY WHAT WE'VE COME HERE TODAY FOR, TO HEAR FROM YOU SO THAT WE COULD FEEL, FOR A MOMENT, A MOMENT IN TIME, WHAT YOU LIVE EVERYDAY.

AND SO I ALSO WANT TO THANK EACH OF YOU, THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE TRAVELED FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO BE HERE WITH US TODAY TO SHARE THOSE STORIES WITH US, TO SHARE YOUR LIVES WITH US, BECAUSE IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE HEAR FROM YOU AS WE GO FORWARD.

AND NOW IT IS A TREMENDOUS HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO TURN THE PROGRAM OVER TO SECRETARY THOMPSON FOR HIS REFLECTIONS AND THE CONCLUDING REMARKS FOR THIS NATIONAL LISTENING SESSION.

EVEN BEFORE HE CAME TO HHS AS THE SECRETARY, I WAS FAMILIAR WITH HIS RECORD AS GOVERNOR OF WISCONSIN,

AS I KNOW SOME OF YOU HAVE ALREADY ELUDED TO.

AS YOU, I WAS VERY IMPRESSED WITH THE THINGS THAT HE ACCOMPLISHED THERE.

BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET TO KNOW HIM OVER THESE LAST FEW MONTHS, I'VE BEEN VERY IMPRESSED WITH HIS PERSONAL COMMITMENT, AND HIS PERSONAL PASSION, AND DEVOTION, AND HIS VISION FOR BRINGING US TOGETHER TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES. AS GOVERNOR, SECRETARY THOMPSON WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR MANY INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS TO ASSIST PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE THEIR HIGHEST LEVELS OF INDEPENDENCE AND TO BECOME FULL AND ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. IN WISCONSIN HE DEVELOPED FAMILY CARE, A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO INSURE THAT PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES WOULD REMAIN IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND HAVE MORE CHOICES AND HAVE PERSONAL CONTROL OVER DECISIONS AND THE SERVICES THAT THEY NEEDED. HE ALSO DEVELOPED PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE TO ENABLE INDIVIDUALS TO REMAIN IN THE WORK FORCE WITHOUT LOSING CRITICAL BENEFITS. SECRETARY THOMPSON ALSO LAYED THE FOUNDATION TO DEVELOP THE CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, MADISON -- AND I WOULD HAVE TO PAUSE THERE, UNLIKE THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL -- TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF SERVICE DELIVERY IN INTERDISCIPLINARY CASE MANAGEMENT IN WISCONSIN'S LONG-TERM PROGRAMS. HE ALSO DEVELOPED IMPORTANT PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH COLLABORATION WITH FANNIE MAE TO DEVELOP HOUSING SUPPORTS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. AND NOW AS SECRETARY OF AN AGENCY THAT HAS 65,000 EMPLOYEES, ALMOST A HALF A TRILLION DOLLAR BUDGET, THAT IS NEARLY A QUARTER OF THE FEDERAL BUDGET, SECRETARY THOMPSON IS PUTTING HIS IDEAS

TO WORK AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL.

THE PRESIDENT HAS RECOGNIZED HIM AS A MAN OF ACTION, NOT SIMPLY A MAN OF WORDS, THAT HE TOO IS A MAN OF GREAT COMMITMENT TO BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO COMMUNITY LIVING AND INTEGRATION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

AND SO THE PRESIDENT ASKED SECRETARY THOMPSON TO LEAD THIS EFFORT AS PART OF THE PRESIDENT'S NEW FREEDOM INITIATIVE.

AND INDEED IT'S A PRIVILEGE TO WORK ALONGSIDE OF HIM TO SEE THAT THIS BECOMES A REALITY AT THIS TIME.

>> SO JOIN ME IN WELCOMING THE SECRETARY TOMMY THOMPSON.

THANK YOU.

>> WELL, THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH, CLAUDE.

LET ME JUST START OUT BY THANKING CLAUDE ALLEN.

HE IS THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.

HE STARTED THE PROGRAM THIS MORNING.

HE HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN ISSUES FOR THE DISABLED COMMUNITY FOR MANY YEARS, AND HE'S PASSIONATE ABOUT IT.

AND WHEN I ASKED AROUND THE SENIOR COUNSELORS WHO WOULD LIKE TO TAKE ON THIS INITIATIVE AND SUPERVISE IT AND MAKE SURE THAT WE DON'T MISS SOMETHING,

CLAUDE ALLEN SAID, I WANT TO DO IT.

AND I THANK YOU, CLAUDE.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FRIENDSHIP.

AND MORE THAN THAT, I THANK YOU FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP.

AND YOU'RE A DEDICATED INDIVIDUAL.

AND AS CLAUDE HAS INDICATED, YOU KNOW, I WISH I COULD HAVE BEEN

HERE ALL DAY.

AND ALL THE COMMENTS THAT I'VE HEARD FROM YOU,
BOB WILLIAMS, OUTSTANDING.

JACK, MY HEART GOES OUT TO YOU, AND WE'RE GOING TO WORK ON YOUR
INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM AS LONG AS I'M SECRETARY.

AND SO MANY OF YOUR OTHER DISCUSSIONS ON WORKING ON MEDICAID.

ONE PROBLEM I HAVE ON WORKING ON MEDICAID IS THAT THINGS IN
WASHINGTON ARE INTERMINABLY SLOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

I GOT TO TELL YOU, THEY'RE SLOW.

YOU KNOW, WHEN I WAS GOVERNOR, I USED TO HAVE A GOOD IDEA LIKE
"PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE".

I WAS THE FIRST ONE IN THE COUNTRY TO COME UP WITH "PATHWAYS TO
INDEPENDENCE" TO CONTINUE TO ALLOW PEOPLE TO RECEIVE BENEFITS
WHILE THEY WERE WORKING.

SO IT DIDN'T MAKE ANY SENSE TO ME.

LESS THAN 1% OF THE PEOPLE ON SSI ARE WORKING BECAUSE WHY?\E
THEY LOSE THEIR MEDICAL BENEFITS FOR WORKING.

ISN'T THAT STUPID?\E

I MEAN, JUST PLAIN DUMB.

AND SO WE CHANGED IN WISCONSIN, BUT IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO
DO.

IT JUST MADE COMMON SENSE.

AND SO MANY THINGS.

BUT MEDICAID, YOU DO THINGS, I HAVE FOUND, IN WASHINGTON, YOU
KNOW, THE PROCESS IS SLOW.

AND INSTEAD OF BEING ABLE TO DO SOMETHING IMMEDIATELY, YOU HAVE

TO VET IT THROUGH A LOT OF DIFFERENT LAYERS.
AND I'M NOT APOLOGIZING.
I'M JUST TELLING YOU THE WAY IT IS.
AND FIRST THING WE HAVE TO DO IS WE GOT TO DO MEDICARE BEFORE WE
GET TO MEDICAID.
AND SO I'M SO HOPEFUL THAT WE'RE GOING TO BE ABLE TO PASS
MEDICARE AND STRENGTHEN MEDICARE WITH PRESCRIPTION DRUGS AND
OTHERS THAT YOU'VE TALKED ABOUT THIS FALL.
AND THEN NEXT YEAR START WORKING WITH YOUR HELP AND THE REST OF
THE GROUP ON MEDICAID.
AND I'M JUST FEARFUL IF WE DON'T GET MEDICARE PASSED THIS YEAR,
THAT THEN WE'LL HAVE TO WORK ON THAT AGAIN NEXT YEAR.
AND I LIKE TO GET THINGS DONE AND MOVE ON TO THE NEXT THING LIKE
YOU DO.
AND HOPEFULLY WE'LL BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH THAT.
I'VE HAD -- YOU KNOW I'VE BEEN BLESSED BY HAVING WONDERFUL
PEOPLE WORK FOR ME IN THE DEPARTMENT.
AND I WANT TO THANK YOU, LARRY, FOR BEING HERE TODAY.
ROBINSUE FROHBOESE, I DON'T KNOW IF ROBINSUE HAS BEEN
INTERVIEWED, BUT SHE'S ABSOLUTELY -- SHE'S INVOLVED IN HEADING
UP THE CIVIL RIGHTS.
AND SHE IS ABSOLUTELY -- AT 100 POUND, SHE'S THE TOUGHEST 100
POUNDS I'VE EVER MET IN MY LIFE.
SHE IS ABSOLUTELY A TIGER AND A WONDERFUL ADVOCATE.
AND ALONG WITH TOM HAMILTON OVER HERE WHO ARE DEDICATED.
AND THOSE TWO INDIVIDUALS WITH CLAUDE ALLEN ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR

FINDING OUT WHAT'S WORKING HERE TODAY AND DEVELOPING A PLAN THAT WE CAN TAKE TO THE PRESIDENT.

AND I ALSO WANT TO THANK ALL OF THE INDIVIDUALS.

I DON'T KNOW THE REST OF YOU.

YOU HAVE COME TO HEARINGS BEFORE.

BUT HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO A HEARING WHERE 10 DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN HERE ALL DAY LISTENING TO THE CONCERNS?E

AND I WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY THANK YOU TO EACH OF THOSE DEPARTMENT HEADS FOR BEING HERE AND INVOLVED.

AND I THANK YOU ALL.

[APPLAUSE]\\E

>> AND IT SHOWS, YOU KNOW, THAT WE WANT TO GET SOMETHING DONE.

AND I KNOW YOU DO.

AND YOU'VE TRAVELED ALL OVER THE COUNTRY TO COME HERE.

AND TO ME, THAT'S SO IMPRESSIVE, AND I THANK EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU.

AND WE'VE HEARD TODAY FROM SOME EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE, MEN AND WOMEN WHOSE COMMITMENT TO HUMANITY DIGNITY IS MATCHED BY THEIR FORTHRIGHTNESS AND THEIR COURAGE.

AND FOR ME PERSONALLY, OVER THE PAST HOUR, IT'S BEEN GOOD TO HEAR THE CANDID COMMENTS OF SUCH A CROSS SECTION OF WONDERFUL INDIVIDUALS WHO REALLY WANT TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM FOR THE BETTER, NOT ONLY FOR THE FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR OTHER INDIVIDUALS THAT WANT THAT KIND OF HELP AND NEED THAT KIND OF ASSISTANCE.

LET ME THANK YOU FOR YOUR REMARKS AND FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO

SHARE THEM IN A PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT JUST LIKE THIS.

THE ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHER REMINDED US THAT, AND I QUOTE,
"NATURE GAVE US ONE TONGUE AND TWO EARS SO WE COULD HEAR TWICE
AS MUCH AS WE SPEAK."
MY FATHER TOLD ME PRETTY MUCH THE SAME THING.
IT'S GOOD COUNSEL.
AND TODAY MY COLLEAGUES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES AND I HAVE TRIED TO TAKE HEART.
AND ALL THE OTHER VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS FROM THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT.
WE'VE LISTENED WITH INTEREST OF YOUR CONCERN, YOUR OBSERVATIONS
ABOUT PRESIDENT BUSH'S EXECUTIVE ORDER ON COMMUNITY-BASED
ALTERNATIVES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.
YOU HAVE CHALLENGED US.
YOU'VE CRITICIZED US.
AND YOU'VE ENCOURAGED US, FOR WHICH I THANK YOU.
NOW, WHAT WE HAVE TO DO IS INSTEAD OF TAKING, YOU KNOW, THE EASY
WAY OUT AND NOT DOING ANYTHING, WE'VE GOT TO DEVELOP CONCRETE
PLANS AND IDEAS ON HOW WE CHANGE THE SYSTEM FOR THE BETTER AND
THEN IMPLEMENT THEM AND GET IT DONE.
AND THAT'S WHAT THE PEOPLE UP HERE ARE HERE FOR TODAY.
AND THAT'S WHAT CLAUDE ALLEN OUR DEPUTY SECRETARY, ROBINSUE
FROHBOESE AND TOM HAMILTON AND MYSELF ARE GOING TO TAKE AWAY
FROM HERE.
AS YOU ALL KNOW, THE PRESIDENT SIGNED THIS EXECUTIVE ORDER ON
JUNE 18TH.

WE HELD AN EVENT COMMEMORATING THE 11TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADA
IN THE GREAT HALL OF HHS.

AND I WAS THERE, ALONG WITH CLAUDE AND SEVERAL OF YOU.

I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR -- THOSE INDIVIDUALS FOR BEING THERE.

WHY?\E

TO CELEBRATE THE LOSS, SUCCESSES, AND DISCUSS THE PRESIDENT'S
EXECUTIVE ORDER AND HOW WE CAN DO A BETTER JOB FOR THE FUTURE.

THE EXECUTIVE ORDER IS THE ESSENTIAL PART OF THE PRESIDENT'S NEW
FREEDOM INITIATIVE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED THE NEW FREEDOM INITIATIVE AS ONE OF HIS
FIRST ACTS IN OFFICE.

IN ORDER WHY?\E

TO SEND A STRONG MESSAGE THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION WANTS TO BREAK
DOWN THE BARRIERS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

THE NEW FREEDOM INITIATIVE ALSO FULFILLS THE GOALS OF THE
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, WHICH WAS SIGNED INTO LAW BY
THE FIRST PRESIDENT BUSH IN 1990.

THE PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE ORDER PROVIDES AN HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY
TO ENABLE PEOPLE OF ANY AGE WHO HAVE A DISABILITY TO LIVE AND TO
BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

THAT ISN'T THAT MUCH TO ASK FOR.

IT'S THE RIGHT THING.

IT'S THE RIGHT CAUSE.

THE EXECUTIVE ORDER DIRECTS FEDERAL AGENCIES TO DO SEVERAL
IMPORTANT THINGS.

FIRST, TO WORK TOGETHER TO HELP STATES ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE

ADA.

I THINK JUST THE FACT THAT EVERYBODY IS HERE TODAY REPRESENTING THEIR DEPARTMENT IS A STRONG INDICATION THAT THAT COOPERATION IS HERE AND WE'LL ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING.

NEXT, TO MAKE SURE THAT EXISTING FEDERAL RESOURCES ARE USED IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE MANNER TO SUPPORT THE GOALS OF THE ADA AND TO IMPLEMENT THE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION, THE OLMSTEAD CASE, WHICH RULED THAT PLACING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN INSTITUTIONS WHEN THEY DON'T NEED TO BE THERE, VIOLATES THE ADA.

AND THAT'S NOT THAT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND.

THIRD, TO EVALUATE AGENCY POLICIES, PROGRAMS, STATUTES, AND REGULATIONS.

AND BE ABLE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THEY SHOULD BE CHANGED IN ORDER TO IMPROVE AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES FOR WITH DISABILITIES.

AND FINALLY, TO INVOLVE CONSUMERS, ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION PROVIDERS, AND RELEVANT AGENCIES IN EVALUATING HOW THEY ARE ALL MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF ADA.

WE'RE GOING TO SUBMIT THE RESULTS OF THESE EVALUATIONS AS WELL AS THE HEARING TODAY TO THE PRESIDENT BY OCTOBER 16TH.

I AM PLEASED AND HONORED THAT THE PRESIDENT ASKED ME TO LEAD MY COLLEAGUES AND OTHER AGENCIES IN CARRYING OUT THE TASK ASSIGNED TO US BY THAT EXECUTIVE ORDER.

ALL OF US BELIEVE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN AND MUST DO MORE TO BRING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF AMERICAN LIFE.

WE ALL ARE COMMITTED TO BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS AND OPENING DOORS.

AND WE ALL WANT TO TAKE A HARD LOOK AT THE PROGRAMS THAT OUR AGENCIES OPERATE AND THE RULES THAT GOVERN THOSE PROGRAMS, TO SEE WHETHER CHANGE AND MODERNIZATION SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN ORDER TO MEET THE GOALS OF THE ADA AND THE NEW FREEDOM INITIATIVE. TO THAT END, I'M INSTRUCTING HHS TO REVIEW AND TAKE STEPS TO ADDRESS THE INSTITUTIONAL BIAS THAT MANY HAVE CRITICIZED IN THE MEDICAID PROGRAM.

THIS REVIEW IS PART OF THE SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS THAT I MENTIONED EARLIER THAT IS DIRECTED TO US BY THE PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE ORDER.

THIS SELF-EVALUATION WILL BE REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT AS WELL ON OCTOBER 16TH AND WILL HELP US BETTER DEFINE HOW TO IMPROVE THIS IMPORTANT PART OF THE MEDICAID PROGRAM.

AND I WOULD WELCOME YOUR SUGGESTIONS REPRESENTING THE ELDERLY AND ANYBODY ELSE REPRESENTING AN ORGANIZATION OR INDIVIDUALS THAT MIGHT BE ABLE TO GIVE ME IDEAS ON HOW WE CAN IMPROVE IT. WE ALSO HAVE TO DO MORE TO ENSURE THAT FUNDING FOR LONG-TERM SERVICES FOLLOWS EACH PERSON IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR NEEDS.

I SET THAT PROGRAM UP IN WISCONSIN.

AND EVEN THOUGH I LEFT BEFORE IT WAS FULLY IMPLEMENTED, IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

RATHER THAN BEING DIVIDED UP IN A WAY THAT ALL TOO OFTEN FORCES PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS TO ENGAGE IN A FRUSTRATING SEARCH FOR RESOURCES AS WELL AS SUPPORTS.

WE'VE ALSO TO DO BETTER IN ENSURING THAT THERE ARE ADEQUATE SERVICE PROVIDERS IN THE COMMUNITY AND THAT WE OFFER ENOUGH SUPPORT FOR THEM.

I UNDERSTAND THAT THAT WAS ONE OF THE MOST TALKED ABOUT TOPICS HERE TODAY.

AND FOR THE FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS WHO OFTEN GIVE MOST OF THEIR DAY-TO-DAY CARE AND SUPPORT WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. WE'VE GOT TO RECOGNIZE THE RELATIVES.

BECAUSE IF THEY'RE NOT THERE TAKING CARE OF THEM, INDIVIDUALS WILL END UP IN INSTITUTIONS THAT COST A LOT MORE MONEY.

IT JUST MAKES COMMON SENSE TO FIND A WAY TO HELP THEM.

TO HELP ADVANCE THESE GOALS, HHS IS INVITING PROPOSALS FROM STATES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THEIR DISABILITY AND AGING COMMUNITIES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE IMPROVEMENTS IN COMMUNITY, LONG-TERM SUPPORT SYSTEMS.

THESE SYSTEMATIC CHANGES WILL HELP DISABLED CHILDREN AND ADULTS OF ANY AGE TO LIVE IN THE COMMUNITY SETTING BEST SUITED TO THEIR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS AND TO BE ABLE TO HAVE GREATER CHOICES IN THEIR LIVING ARRANGEMENTS, PROVIDER SERVICES, AND THE WAY THEY RECEIVE ASSISTANCE AND TO OBTAIN QUALITY SERVICES IN THE MOST EFFICIENT MANNER POSSIBLE.

THE CENTERS FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID SERVICES, CMS, WILL PROVIDE SYSTEMS CHANGES FOR COMMUNITY LIVING GRANTS TO HELP STATES ACHIEVE THESE GOALS AS THEY RETHINK HOW BEST TO SERVE THEIR DISABLED COMMUNITIES.

AND UP TO \$70 MILLION WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THIS GRANT PROGRAM

THAT I'M ANNOUNCING HERE TODAY.

WE'RE ALSO COMMITTED TO HELPING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES BECOME BETTER INTEGRATED INTO THEIR COMMUNITIES.

THAT'S WHY, AS I MENTIONED A FEW MOMENTS AGO, A CRUCIAL PART OF OUR EFFORT UNDER THE EXECUTIVE ORDER IS TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS, AS WELL AS THE ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION, PROVIDERS, AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES, AND OTHERS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE INVOLVED AND TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE THEIR INPUT IN THE FEDERAL SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS.

AND A LONG WAYS WAS ACCOMPLISHED HERE TODAY WITH THIS HEARING.

AND THAT'S ALSO WHY WE ALSO NEED TO BE DEDICATED TO FULFILL THE GOALS OF THE EXECUTIVE ORDER AFTER THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT IS SUBMITTED TO THE PRESIDENT ON OCTOBER 16TH.

THIS ISN'T ABOUT JUST PRODUCING ANOTHER GOVERNMENT REPORT THAT'S ISSUED WITH FANFARE AND THEN COLLECTS DUST.

IT'S ABOUT HELPING PEOPLE.

IT'S ABOUT HELPING YOU.

INDIVIDUALS LEAD BETTER LIVES.

THAT'S A GOAL THAT DESERVES OUR BEST EFFORTS AND OUR MOST EFFECTIVE ACTION.

MY COLLEAGUES AND I HAVE COME TODAY BECAUSE WE WANTED TO LEARN FROM YOU.

AND WE'VE LEARNED A LOT.

AND I THANK YOU FOR THAT.

IN ORDER TO MAKE REAL PROGRESS, WE MUST FIRST LISTEN TO YOU AND THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW THE BARRIERS BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE COULD.

WE CAN'T PROPERLY DO OUR JOB WITHOUT YOUR HELP, WITHOUT YOUR INPUT AND YOUR ADVICE.

BUT JUST AS WE HAVE LISTENED, WE NOW NEED TO BE READY TO APPLY WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED.

AND WE MUST KEEP WORKING TOGETHER AS A TEAM.

HENRY FORD KNEW A FEW THINGS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAM WORK.

HIS AUTOMATED ASSEMBLY LINES ALL DEPENDED ON TEAMS OF PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER WITH PRECISION AND MUTUAL TRUST.

IN HIS WORDS, AND I QUOTE, "COMING TOGETHER IS THE BEGINNING; STAYING TOGETHER IS PROGRESS, BUT WORKING TOGETHER IS TRULY SUCCESS."

AND THAT'S WHAT I'M ASKING YOU ALL TO DO, IS WORK TOGETHER WITH US TO ACCOMPLISH BETTER GOALS, BETTER RULES, BETTER LAWS, AND BETTER REGULATIONS.

BY WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN OFFER THE PRESIDENT A REVIEW OF FEDERAL POLICY THAT HOPEFULLY CAN LEAD TO SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE LIVES OF SO MANY AMERICANS.

AND THAT CAN GO A LONG WAYS TOWARDS ENABLING THE DISABLED AMERICANS TO FULLY INTEGRATE INTO EVERY SPEAR OF LIFE.

THAT'S THE AMERICAN WAY.

AND THAT'S THE REAL GOAL OF ADA.

AND THAT'S ULTIMATELY WHY WE'RE ALL HERE TODAY.

I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO COME.

AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, AS CLAUDE HAS MENTIONED, TO SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES AND IDEAS WITH US.

WE'RE VERY EAGER TO PARTNER WITH YOU AS WE PURSUE THE GOAL OF

GREATER OPPORTUNITY AND, YES, GREATER HOPE, FOR YOU AND FOR ALL AMERICANS.

THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME.

[APPLAUSE]

>> THANK YOU, MR. SECRETARY.

AND AS WE CLOSE, I DON'T WANT TO FORGET TO THANK THOSE WHO TRULY WORKED VERY HARD TO MAKE THIS NATIONAL LISTENING SESSION A SUCCESS.

WE'VE ALREADY MENTIONED FOLKS FROM HHS WHO'VE REALLY BEEN BEHIND A LOT OF THIS WORK.

BUT THERE HAVE BEEN SOME OTHERS HERE THAT I WANT TO RECOGNIZE BEFORE WE CLOSE.

AND IF THEY WILL STAND, THAT WE CAN THANK YOU: KATHY RAMA, GINA CLEMENS, CLAUDIA SLOSBERG, AND ALL THE OTHER VOLUNTEERS THAT I DON'T HAVE YOUR NAMES, BUT IF YOU COULD STAND AROUND THE ROOM, WE WANT TO THANK YOU FOR PUTTING TOGETHER A TREMENDOUS PROGRAM. AND AGAIN, THIS IS NOT THE END OF THE PROCESS.

THIS REALLY IS TRULY JUST THE BEGINNING.

WE WANTED TO HEAR FROM YOU.

WE WILL BE WORKING TO PREPARE THE REPORT.

BUT BEYOND THAT THE REAL WORK IS TAKING WHAT WE LEARNED AND BEGINNING TO APPLY IT.

SO, AGAIN, I WANT TO THANK ALL OF YOU FOR COMING TO PARTICIPATE.

AND I WANT TO THANK OUR FEDERAL AGENCY COUNTERPARTS HERE WHO HAVE WORKED WITH US AS WELL AND ALL THE AGENCY LEADERS AND REPRESENTATIVES.

THANK YOU.

AND HAVE A GREAT AFTERNOON.

To view the other parts of the listening session, click on the links below.

[Welcome by Deputy Secretary Allen and other Federal Staff](#) - Pages 1-29

[AM Testimony](#) - Pages 29-96

[Noon Open Microphone Testimony](#) - Pages 96-163

[PM Testimony](#) - Pages 163-251

PM Open Microphone Testimony and Closing Remarks by Secretary Thompson - Pages 251-302